COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (d) All the States of the country have been benefited by the "Telecom Revolution". These benefits are likely to be more in those States where the penetration of telecommunication facility is more, the measure of which is tele-density (number of telephones per 100 inhabitants).

In this respect the following States excluding the Union Territories, have comparatively higher tele-density of more than 5 per 100 persons.

Delhi (15.27), Goa (8.11), Kerala (5.55), Maharashtra (5.33) and Punjab (5.18).

The States which have tele-density less than 2 per 100 persons as on 31.3.2000 are:

Assam (1.06), Bihar (0.65), Madhya Pradesh (1.54), Orissa (1.21), Uttar Pradesh (1.33), J&K (1.31), Tripura (1.19), Manipur (.99), Meghalaya (1.60) and Nagaland (1.55).

The tele-density of Rajasthan as on 31.3.2000 was 2.11. Although the tele-density of Rajasthan is less than the national average of 2.85 per 100 persons, it is better than many States as mentioned above. Provision of telephone facility is based on demand is linked to the overall economic development of States. However, it has been the endeavour of the Government to reduce the disparity by making talephone availble on demand as early as possible during the 9th Five Year Plan ending in March, 2002.

The waiting list of Rajasthan as on 31.3.2000 was 95,172 as against the overall waiting list of 36.81 lakh in the country. A target providing 2.1 lakh new telephone connections in Rajasthan during the current financial year has been fixed to clear the waiting list progressivley.

Telephone Connections in Villages of Madhya Pradesh

4607. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have set certain target dates to provides telephone connections to all the villages in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Haryana, Punjab, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) how many villages in Madhya Pradesh are without telephone connection;

(d) whether Government have drawn up any plan to provide telephone connections to all these villages in Madhya Pradesh; and

(e) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In accordance with New Telecom Policy 1999 the Government has planned to provide telephone facility to all the villages in the country by March 2002 with the participation of Private Fixed Service Providers. However, attempts are being made to cover the villages by August 2000 for Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Punjab and by March 2001 for Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh subject to availability of equipment and contribution by Private Fixed Service Providers complementing the efforts of Government. In Kerala all villages have already been provided with telecom facility.

(c) to (e) In Madhya Pradesh, 25,028 villages are without telephone facility as on 1.4.2000. All the remaining villages are proposed to be provided with telecom facility by March, 2002 progressively with participation of Private Fixed Service Provider.

Modernisation of Telecom Services in Orissa

4608. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to modernise the post offices and telecommunications services in Orissa;

(b) if so, the funds earmarked for the purpose during the Ninth Five Year Plan; and

(c) the steps taken to modernise the Post and Telecommunication services in that State particularly in the rural, hilly and inaccessible areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Rs. 78 Lakhs have been spent for modernisation of Post